

Statement of Joseph R. Sculley
President
Motor Transport Association of Connecticut
Before
Appropriations Committee's Transportation Subcommittee
Feb 22, 2017

**Re: H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR
THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING
APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR**

MTAC Suggests Amendment

Co-Chairs Formica, Osten, and Walker, Ranking Member Ziobron, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony regarding proposed appropriations for transportation during the next couple of years.

I am Joe Sculley, President of the Motor Transport Association of Connecticut (MTAC), which represents more than 650 trucking companies, and companies that happen to have commercial trucks which are operated in conjunction with their primary business. MTAC is also an affiliate of the American Trucking Associations (ATA) federation, and as such, works collaboratively with other state trucking associations to promote and protect the ability for interstate trucking companies to conduct business across state lines.

Considering the financial situation facing the state, MTAC believes that Governor Malloy's budget proposal is one that strives to provide some predictability and stability to the business community – including the trucking industry – in Connecticut.

However, we believe that a change should be made to improve the safety and security of truckers. Specifically, we would like to change the proposal to close rest areas in order to save \$500,000. MTAC suggests that this money could be restored if adjustments were made to one or more provisions contained in the proposal.

One potential way to restore rest area funding would be to shift the \$500,000 for "Funding for Public Transportation Marketing" to rest area funding. Governor Malloy and the DOT said in August 2016 that 4 million rides had been taken on CT Fastrak since it began service in March



2015, far exceeding their expectations. If that is the case, the general public is well aware of CT Fastrak, and further marketing efforts are probably not necessary.

Another alternative could be a slight reduction in service on the Hartford Line in order to make funds available for rest areas. Some combination of these two suggestions could also be implemented.

Rest areas provide valuable space where interstate truck drivers take federally-mandated rest and sleep breaks. Without available safe places to park and sleep, drivers are forced to keep driving and could wind up being forced to violate federal Hours of Service driving limits. Either that, or the drivers park in unsafe areas or areas not designated for truck parking.

There is a national shortage of safe truck parking, and Connecticut should do everything it can to not make that situation worse.

Congress recently mandated that a truck parking study be completed, in an act known as “Jason’s law.” The law was named after truck driver Jason Rivenburg, who was killed because he was forced to park at an abandoned gas station to wait to deliver his load because there was no other parking available. His killer robbed him for the seven dollars he had in his pocket.

The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) contributed to the study, and their contributions noted that Connecticut has a “severe shortage” of safe truck parking.

Keeping rest areas accessible, open, and fully staffed helps mitigate the chances that drivers will be put in the same unsafe situation as Jason Rivenburg.

Despite implementation of new rail and transit options, CT must not forget its highway user community. Please consider a minor adjustment in order to fully staff rest areas, for the safety of both truck drivers and passenger car drivers.